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RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0322  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0321  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0314  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000332

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/W  
STATE FOR INR/AA  
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY  
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK  
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR  
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH  
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT-ELECT'S EVOLVING PLANS FOR  
RESOLVING NIGER DELTA CRISIS

LAGOS 00000332 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for reasons 1.4 (b and d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Vice President-elect Goodluck Jonathan told Consul General the new administration would immediately address the Niger Delta crisis and the problems of inadequate electrical power generation. Secretary of Bayelsa State Government Dr. Godknows Igali envisions providing militants a two-month training program to help change mind-sets and give them job-related skills, buying the administration time in which to create actual job opportunities for them. According to their general concepts, disarmament could be initiated with a cease-fire during which the administration would earn the trust of the militants. Whether the new administration will be willing to tackle and solve the root causes of the crisis, including Jonathan and cohorts' involvement in militancy and in the failures of political representation and government performance, remains to be seen. End Summary.

¶2. (C) The incoming Yar'Adua-Jonathan administration will immediately address the issues of security in the Niger Delta and Nigeria's energy needs, Vice-President-elect and Bayelsa State Governor Goodluck Jonathan told the Consul General on May 2. Jonathan said the Niger Delta challenges must be met or had to be solved after May 29 "or else I fail." He promised to draw experts, government leaders and communities together to address the problems.

¶3. (C) Solving these problems will significantly lower, if not eradicate, kidnapping incidents, the Vice President-elect said. The May 1 kidnapping of six expatriates, including American citizen John Stapleton, is in part politically motivated; the Bayelsa State Government is already working on the problem and hopes to have it resolved within several days, Jonathan remarked. The Vice President-elect thanked the Consul General for informing them that the American hostage has health problems that make it imperative that he receive medication as quickly as possible.

14. (C) A two-pronged approach will be used to ameliorate the Niger Delta, explained Dr. Godknows Igali, Secretary to Bayelsa State Government (SSG) and Special Advisor to the President on the Niger Delta. First, militants in the creeks must be encouraged to change their attitudes about society and government as well as to change their behavior. Because the Bayelsa State Government does not pay ransom for hostages, the Government has begun to enroll certain militant youths, at their request, in training programs in South Africa as part of the quid pro quo for the release of hostages. Igali anticipates enrolling militant youths in similar one to two month courses that would provide them with basic skills while helping them turn away from the militant life. This would "buy the Government some time," Igali said, to prepare to provide job opportunities, which are essential to giving the youths an alternative to militancy. These job opportunities would be in agriculture, fisheries, and construction of housing and public works. Micro-finance programs will also be needed to allow youths to begin small businesses.

15. (C) While training and job opportunities will be sufficient to wean the majority of the "foot soldiers" away from their militant lifestyles, the militant leaders will need more coaxing with more attractive incentives. Igali and his colleague, Edo State Deputy Governor Mike Oghiadomhe, suggested some militant leaders could be persuaded to turn from militancy by giving them grants or concessionary loans to set up ventures such as fisheries or tree farms.

16. (C) Second, militants will need to be disarmed, Igali said. Disarmament and demobilization are very sensitive subjects with the militants. Igali is considering arranging a cease-fire, during which time the government would need to begin implementing the above-mentioned training projects and other confidence building mechanisms.

LAGOS 00000332 002.2 OF 002

17. (C) Attempting to defend the quality of the elections, the Vice President-elect asserted Nigeria's democracy is progressing. From the period of the Second Republic, few leaders from the north visited the south, and vice versa. Even during campaigns, some political candidates preferred to drop campaign flyers from helicopters rather than to come face-to-face with the voters. However, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) actively campaigned in every one of Nigeria's Local Government Areas (LGAs), he said. The party held numerous rallies, including in Bayelsa State, where other parties and candidates did not bother to campaign. The PDP wanted to win Lagos, but the Action Congresses on-the-ground structure was better, resulting in their win, he said. The May 29 inauguration that marks the first civilian to civilian transition will be a historic occasion, he said. The Consul General told Jonathan that he risked his credibility by overly-defending the election as many aspects of it were indefensible. Instead, the new government would be doing itself a favor by acknowledging the lapses and seeking assistance early on in attending to those gaps.

18. (C) Comment: That the new administration sees the Niger Delta as its top priority is welcome news. Although the Vice President-elect and the SSG provided the broad outlines of a plan to pacify the militants, there are many details that remain unclear. If we take what they say at face value, the incoming administration, in contrast to its predecessor, seems willing to seek international input and assistance in addressing the issues of the Niger Delta. However, whether the new administration will be willing to tackle and solve the root causes of the crisis, including Jonathan and cohorts' involvement in militancy and in the failures of political representation and government performance, remains to be seen. End Comment.

BROWNE